

Scouts Australia Youth Program Review



13 Feb 2015

Fellow Scouting members

The Youth Program Review is conducting a wide variety of research to ensure we develop the best possible youth program for our future youth members. This research requires feedback from our own members, members who have left Scouting, and the wider community to understand the perceptions and needs of both potential youth members and the parents of our prospective members. Furthermore, it requires a sound understanding of the developmental nature of young people in today's society.

Our research is a multi faceted approach using external demographers and researchers, our own teams, summarising previous research and working with other similar National Scout Organisations.

The following research was completed by researcher Kellie Loveless for the Youth Program Review. Kellie Loveless holds a Bachelor of Behavioural Sciences (Honours) First Class, a Graduate Diploma in Psychology and a Bachelor of Management (Marketing). Kellie also has a work history as a consultant and researcher and is a former Scout.

This report explores Scouting age ranges and sections in different countries and the Australian national curriculum to build foundational knowledge for further research. This work is a key resource for the YPR in building a program that best meets the changing needs of Australian youth.

At times our research will challenge our thinking, garner support and generate angst and concern. Share your thoughts at ypr.scouts.com.au; through discussion great ideas can evolve. If the YPR isn't contentious then we aren't doing our job!

YPR team

School Age Summary Report

Author:

This research has been conducted, and the report collated by Kellie Loveless for the Scouts Australia Youth Program Review.

Date completed:

07.12.14 (updated 10/02/15)

Content:

The following report combines information from the below tasks and includes the key points derived from “Children, Adolescents and Young Adults’ Age Ranges and Developmental Abilities” a report requested by Scouts Australia (Qld Branch) in 2014.

1. Gather and summarise current data on school starting ages in all Australian States and Territories.
2. Gather evidence and provide a summary of the key developmental milestones utilised in Australian schooling in determining transition points, year levels and year level groupings (ie: primary, middle school etc.)
3. Gather and summarise current Irish, UK and New Zealand Scouting section age ranges and their corresponding school system age ranges.
4. Gather and summarise any other relevant aspects of recent age range reviews undertaken by the above countries.

1. Current data on school starting ages in all Australian States and Territories.

1.1 Starting Ages for Primary Schooling

The most recent data on school starting ages in all Australian States and Territories is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1.

School starting ages in all Australian States and Territories

State/ Territory	First year (pre Year 1)	Min. age eligible to commence Primary School	Compulsory school starting age
New South Wales	Kindergarten	Child must be 5 on or before 31st July in the year they start school.	6
Victoria	Preparatory	Child must be 5 on or before the 30 th April in the year they start school.	6
Queensland	Preparatory ^(c)	Child must be 5 years on or before the 30 th June in the year they start school.	6.5
South Australia	Reception	Child must be 5 years on or before the 1 st May in the year they start school.	6
Western Australia	Pre-primary	Child must be 5 years on or before the 30 th June in the year they start school.	From the beginning of the year a child turns 6.5.
Tasmania	Preparatory	Child must be 5 years on or before the 1 st of January in the year they start school.	Must be 5 on or before the 1 st of Jan in the year they start school.
Northern Territory	Transition	Child must be 5 years on or before the 30 th June in the year they start school.	6
Australian Capital Territory	Kindergarten	Child must be 5 on or before the 30 th April in the year they start school.	6

All States and Territories begin the schooling year in January. This is a recent change as previously some States and Territories had the option of a mid year intake.

Minimum age for school eligibility varies slightly between States and Territories as seen in Table 1. The minimum age for children to be eligible to commence primary school ranges between turning 5 years old on or before

the 1st of January (Tasmania) and on or before the 31st July (New South Wales) in the year they commence school.

From the age of six, a child is of compulsory school education age in all states and territories except Queensland (6 years and 6 months) and Tasmania (5 years). In practice, most children start the preliminary year of primary school at between four-and-a-half and five-and-a-half.

1.2 Starting Ages for Secondary Schooling

High School commencement varies in States and Territories firstly based on the transition to high school varying across the States and Territories.

As seen in Table 2, in all states and territories (except SA), children move into high school in Year 7 (age range: 11.5 – 13.5 years old). In South Australia, students move to high school in Year 8 (12 ½ - 14.5 years old). Western Australia and Queensland previously operated inline with South Australia however are making the transition to include Year 7 in high school in 2015.

Table 2.

Division between Primary and Secondary Schooling in Australian States and Territories (as of 2015)

State/ Territory	First year (pre Year 1)	Primary schooling	Secondary schooling
New South Wales	Kindergarten		
Victoria	Preparatory		
Tasmania	Preparatory	Years 1–6	Years 7–12
Northern Territory	Transition		
Australian Capital Territory	Kindergarten		
Western Australia	Pre-primary		
Queensland	Preparatory		
South Australia	Reception	Years 1–7	Years 8–12

1.3 Individual Schooling

Within the overall structure of primary and secondary education there is further scope for variation in the structure of individual schools. Both government and non-government schools may be primary only, secondary only or combined primary and secondary. Secondary schools may accommodate the full age range of secondary students or be divided into junior and senior campuses. Government and some non-government school authorities operate special schools for students with disabilities and other special needs.

2. Key developmental milestones utilised in Australian schooling in determining transition points, year levels and year level groupings (ie: primary, middle school etc.)

2.1 Previous research

Children, Adolescents and Young Adults' Age Ranges and Developmental Abilities (2014), a report requested by Scout Association (QLD Branch), compiled by Dr Hsien-Jin Teoh with input from Dr John Pearn, David Rogers, Michele Johnson sets the scene in providing some background into lifespan development literature.

To build on this previous work in identifying the key developmental milestones utilised by Australian schooling in determining transition points, year levels and year groupings, there needs to be a clear understanding of the Australian National Curriculum.

2.2 The Australian National Curriculum

Historically Australia has had different curriculum structures governed at a state or territory level. As a result of this, each education system was formally quite different. Australian educators have been working towards a national curriculum for primary and secondary education for some time. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) can be seen as an outcome of years of national collaboration on education. In 1989 as part of the Hobart Declaration and then in the 1999 Adelaide Declaration, State, Territory and Commonwealth Education Ministers committed to working together to ensure high quality schooling for all young Australians.

The Australian National Curriculum sets consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians. It sets out, through content descriptions and achievement standards, what students should be taught and achieve, as they progress through school. It is the base for future learning, growth and active participation in the Australian community.

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) are responsible for developing the Australian Curriculum through rigorous, consultative national processes. Implementation of the Australian National Curriculum is in its infancy, however the key developmental milestones used in determining transition points between year levels and year level groupings are likely to provide a framework from which to base scouting curriculum and transition points.

2.3 The Shape of the Australian Curriculum

The document "The Shape of the Australian Curriculum (v1 2009) (v2 2010) (v3 2011) (v4 2012)" was written to guide the development of the first phase of the Australian Curriculum. Versions 1 through to 4 provide a historical picture of the developing curriculum and provide the underpinning body of knowledge on which the curriculum is built. The frameworks detailed in "The Shape of the Australian Curriculum" are pivotal in understanding the key

developmental milestones utilised in Australian schooling in determining transition points, year levels and year level groupings.

According to The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 2 (2010) the curriculum has been written to take into account the growth and development of young people across the years of schooling and the diverse needs of students across the Australian population. As described in the paper by Dr Hsien-Jin Teoh, theories of child development define milestones in cognitive ability, socialisation and moral development. In developing the National Curriculum academic milestones have been embedded into banding curriculum content according to the developmental stage.

Version 4 (2012) of The Shape of the Australian Curriculum describes knowledge, understanding and skills organised by learning areas. For each general learning capability, a learning continuum has been developed that describes the knowledge, skills, behaviors and dispositions that students can be expected to have developed at particular stages of schooling.

Table 3 outlines the major developmental bands throughout schooling years identified in “The Shape of the Australian Curriculum - Version 2” and the content transition periods explained in Version 4. The subsequent summary of each overarching developmental stage is drawn from Version 2.

Table 3

Summary of child transition points across the school lifespan by school year according to The Shape of the Australian Curriculum, a report created to guide development of the Australian National Curriculum.

Year Level	Foundation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
V2 Developmental Stages	Early Years			Concrete to Abstract Thinking					Transition to Adulthood		Choices: Pathways through school & beyond		
V4 Content Transition Periods	F-10											Senior Secondary	
	F-2			3-4		5-6		7-8		9-10		11-12	

2.4 Developmental Stages: Early Years (Years F-2)

Between five and eight years of age (typically Foundation to Year 2) the curriculum focuses on the importance of communication, language and building relationships.

Priority is given to:

- foundation knowledge
- developing understanding and skills for continued learning
- literacy and numeracy development
- motor skills development

- physical activity and education
- development of safe and healthy personal practices
- developing sensory, cognitive and affective appreciation of the world around them through exploratory and creative learning
- the opportunity to learn a language may be available.

The Australian Curriculum builds on the national Early Years Learning Framework and builds on its key learning outcomes, namely:

- children have a strong sense of identity;
- children are connected with, and contribute to, their world;
- children have a strong sense of wellbeing;
- children are confident and involved learners; and
- children are effective communicators.

2.5 Developmental Stages: Concrete to Abstract Thinking (Years 3-4, 5-6, 7-8)

Priority is given to the following key developmental milestones:

- understanding and appreciating different points of view
- concentrating on tasks for longer periods of time
- thought processes becoming more logical and consistent
- gradually becoming more independent as learners
- looking for and valuing learning they perceive as relevant, consistent with personal goals, and/or leading to important outcomes.

2.5.2 Transition to Secondary School

The transition from primary to secondary school coincides with a range of significant physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes. Students often begin to question established conventions, practices and values. Their interests extend well beyond their own communities and they develop concerns about wider issues.

A national move (apart from SA) to commence high school in Year 7 (rather than Year 8) assists with the implementation of the national curriculum and provides opportunities for ongoing development opportunities for students. According to the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment, “Educators agree that young teenagers are ready for greater independence and the depth of learning that high school provides, which is why in most other states and high school, Year 7 students are able to benefit from access to specialist resources and teachers, such as science labs and science teachers.”

2.6 Developmental Stages: Transition to Adulthood (Years 9-10)

In the middle and upper secondary years of schooling students have a clearer sense of their strengths, interests and goals. They begin to see themselves as active players in community life and are often concerned about major social and environmental issues and the ethical implications of human activity and knowledge.

The design of the Australian Curriculum for Years 9 and 10 recognises that many students commence senior secondary pathways and programs, including vocational pathways.

Priority is given to the following outcomes:

- increased opportunities for students to make choices about learning pathways
- deepened understanding in each learning area
- learning opportunities in English, mathematics, science, history, and health and physical education for all students
- learning opportunities from other learning areas and in vocational and applied learning, including National Trade Cadetships
- flexibility for students to undertake more specialised learning pathways that ensure all students are fully engaged and prepared to continue learning into the senior secondary years.

2.6 Developmental Stages: Choices: Pathways Through School and Beyond (Years 11-12)

The curriculum for students aged 16 to 18 years of age (typically Years 11 and 12) provides students with increased opportunities to make choices about pathways through school and beyond.

These choices are informed by previous success and enjoyment, future options for training, learning or employment, and the setting in which the learning is to occur. Many young people in this age range have already been in part-time employment or will take up part-time jobs while undertaking their senior secondary schooling.

The senior school curriculum offers more opportunities for specialisation in learning, including within the regular school program and through accredited vocational education and training.

3. Gather and summarise current Irish, UK and New Zealand Scouting section age ranges and their corresponding school system age ranges.

The Irish, United Kingdom and New Zealand Scouting section age ranges and their corresponding school system age ranges is summarised in Table 4 below. Table 5 provides complementary school related details.

Table 4

Current Irish, UK and New Zealand Scouting section age ranges and their corresponding school system age ranges.

IRELAND

Scouts transition by: AGE

School divisions	Primary School							Post Primary School School					Post School									
	Junior Infants	Senior Infants							Junior Cycle			Optional Transition Year	Senior Cycle									
School year			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12								
Age	4/5	5/6	6/7	7/8	8/9	9/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Scout level			Beaver Scouts			Cub Scouts			Scouts			Venturer Scouts		Rover Scouts								
Scout age range			Ages 6, 7, 8			Ages 9, 10, 11			Ages 12, 13, 14, 15			Ages 15, 16, 17		Ages 18, 19 & 20								

UNITED KINGDOM (Great Britain & Northern Ireland)

Scouts transition by: AGE (Note - this is not a hard and fast rule - discretion is used)

School divisions	Primary School						Secondary School					Sixth Form		Post School								
	Key Stage 1		Key Stage 2				Key Stage 3			Key Stage 4		Lower Sixth	Upper Sixth									
Key stage	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13								
School year																						
Age	4/5	5/6	6/7	7/8	8/9	9/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Scout level			Beaver Scouts		Cub Scouts		Scouts		Explorer Scouts			Scout Network										
Scout age range			6 to 8 years		8 to 10.5 years		10.5 to 14 years		14 to 17 years			18 to 25										

NEW ZEALAND

Scouts transition by: SCHOOL YEAR LEVEL

School divisions	Primary School						Secondary School							Post School									
							either primary or separate intermediary school																
School year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13									
Age	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Scout level	Keas (School Years 1-3)			Cubs (School Years 4-6)			Scouts (School Years 7-10)					Venturers (School Years 11-13)		Rovers									
Scout age range	5 to 7 years			8 -10 years			11-14 years					15 to 17 years		18-26 years									

Table 5

Current Irish, United Kingdom and New Zealand school age requirements and year level divisions.

Country	First year	Min. age eligible to commence Primary School	Compulsory school age	Primary school	Secondary school
Ireland	Year 1	Child can be enrolled in school from their 4 th birthday.	6	Years 1 – 6	Year 7 - 12
United Kingdom	Reception	Child must be 5 on or before 1st July in the year they start school (school starts in September).	6	Reception Years 1 – 6	Years 7- 11 Years 12 - 13
New Zealand	Year 1 (*or Year 0)	Child can be enrolled in school from their 5 th birthday.	6	Years 1 – 8	Years 9 - 13

NOTE: NZ: * A child starting primary school for the first time between July (when the school roll is counted) and 31 December of a school year, and aged between five and six, will be classed as year 0. Children who begin school for the first time between 1 January and before the July roll count will be classed as year 1. Children most commonly start school when they turn five even though schooling is compulsory from age six. Where children start school for the first time after the age of six, they are placed in the same year as other children of the same age.

4. Gather and summarise any other relevant aspects of recent age range reviews undertaken by the above countries.

4.1 Ireland

4.1.1 One Programme

Scouting Ireland has just completed a program of renewal and redevelopment called “One Programme” which provides a framework for each scouting level to deliver the Scouting program in a similar way, with relevant, appropriate supporting handbooks. Scouting Ireland developed and designed brand new, age specific, publications aimed to appeal to different age ranges.

4.1.2 Economic value of youth work in Ireland

In 2012 the National Youth Council commissioned Indecon International Economic Consultants to conduct independent research into the economic value of youth work in Ireland. There was clear evidence that Scouting Ireland is a key player in the development of young people in Ireland:

- Of the 882,000+ young people (10-24 y.o.) in Ireland at that time, 382,000 participated in activities provided by youth organisations
- Of those youths participating in youth organisation activities, 5.8% were scouts (22,158 members aged 10-24)
- Scouting Ireland received 1.5% of public funding to the youth work sector in 2011 (€1,200,000)
- Of the 40,000+ voluntary workers in the youth sector, Scouting Ireland’s volunteers accounted for approximately 22% (>9000)
- Adult volunteers provide a youth development capacity equivalent to 1,500 fulltime teachers annually
- 31,663 Scouts (aged 6-18) spend over 100 hours each year on Scout activity (on average 10 days of youth development)

This research forms support for Scouting Ireland’s Vision 2020 report (201, see pp. 12-19). The strategic priorities include undertaking programme reviews and creating clear retention strategies for young people.

4.1.3 Developmental needs based curricula for the Northern Ireland Youth Service

“The use of age specific developmental needs based curricula” (2006) contains a summary of the development of age specific, developmental needs based curricula for the Northern Ireland Youth Service. The Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) established in April 2002 aims is to enhance and support Curriculum Development within the Youth Service in Northern Ireland.

The following summary points from “The use of age specific developmental needs based curricula” provide age relevant information for curriculum development with Irish youth. Granted this paper was written in 2006, the summary points below maintain relevance.

Children: key developmental needs in the 4-10 year age band:

- Physical development: the opportunity to initiate safe and creative play activities that enrich a child's physical abilities promoting good health, skill development, and serving as a pre-requisite for later physical confidence;
- Social development: experiences to enable children to develop personal relationships through informal activities, providing a forum for the expression and testing of communication and social skills leading to self-confidence, value learning and co-operative interactions and;
- Creative stimulation: non-formal activities providing an experience of how things work and contributing to projects which enable an understanding of their environment, relationships, their strengths and limitations.

Young People: key developmental needs in the 10-16 year age band:

- Participation: opportunities for engagement in activities and groupings that allow a personal sense of contribution and community ensuring the development of accountability, personal esteem and membership of society;
- Acceptance by, and of, others: the provision of programmes that encourage healthy relationships, reducing potential prejudice towards others and allowing feedback of acceptance and respect;
- Development and challenge to values and beliefs with other young people, building a foundation for good health, spiritual development and creative contribution to society;
- Engagement with the wider community: opportunities for involvement in community decision making, developing skills and knowledge appropriate to 'active citizenship'.

Young People: key developmental needs in the 10-16 year age band:

- Information: young people face crucial choices between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Accurate information accessible through a variety of mediums is required to enable young people to make informed decisions which support their development. There is inequality in young people's access to information sources and advice.
- Specialist support: many young people will face crises during this period in their lives. Individual support for young people around areas such as health, including sexual and mental health, employment, offending behaviour and accommodation is a requirement;
- Citizenship: support for young adults in the transition to full active participation in community life is particularly relevant in Northern Ireland given the long absence of local democracy and the prevailing sectarianism."

4.1.4 Stages of Development

The following Table provides a summary of the paper titled "Stages of Development" prepared by the National Youth Programme Committee of Scouting Ireland in April 2005. The information can be used to assist understanding of key developmental milestones in children throughout the scouting lifespan.

Table 6

Summary of “Stages of Development”

Pre-Adolescence Age 7-9 Main Theme: Cooperation	
Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young children need boundaries and stability imposed.• Creative thinking can be suppressed (if it is not developed before 11 it will never fully develop).• Exploring the external world. Seeing the potential.
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form constancy and depth perception maturing. Can see the parts and the whole of an object but not at the same time.• Spatial Perception beginning to mature.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ego centric• Beginning to be less egocentric more able to relate to others as different to ourselves.
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concrete operations (Piaget). Are able to engage in co-operative play and act on instructions. Can understand and work in a team. Attention and concentration are very important for learning and the development of the perception of events.• Need to develop reasoning skills. Also need to encourage learning through movement. Becoming more independent in school, can look up own facts and reason through own decisions. Can give instruction based on own experience depending on task.• Encourage to develop critical and creative thinking skills.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before the age of 7 the child's ability to interact in social groups is limited therefore one of the key elements of the scout system the team/patrol system cannot be implemented.• Ego centric, Social Interaction is important for development. Scaffolding (Vygotsky). More involved in extracurricular activities.• Beginning to be less egocentric. Begin to develop boundaries.
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communion Year. Beginning to understand family relationships.• Starting to learn respect for others

Early-Adolescence Age 10-13 Main Theme: Transition

Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self understanding and self esteem really develops at 12.• Beginning to develop and maintain personal boundaries and sense of stability.
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Onset of puberty. Motor and perceptual abilities mature. Gravitating towards same gender groups.• Interest in own bodies developing.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social groups become fragmented. New schools.• Intimacy and loneliness are an issue.• Concept of rebellion starting slang language etc. identity with a group. Emotionally labile. Esteem issues can be misinterpreted.
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concrete problem solving.• Transition from primary school. Looking for approval from peers.• Beginning to think in a more abstract and idealistic way.• Future oriented thought problem resolution.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extracurricular school based activities take up more time. Self confidence is a big issue.
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirmation / Bah Mitzvah Year.

Adolescence Age 14-16 Main Theme: Identity

Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questioning themselves (what do I want to be like) trying out different roles and beliefs.• More reliant on friends than family. Hanging out.• Adolescent problems become a real issue (drugs drink etc). Achieving identity is the MAIN task of adolescence.
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual maturity. Interest in own and other bodies really kicking in.• Sexual intimacy beginning to play a bigger part in their lives. Physical maturity kicking in bringing physical identity issues (good and bad).
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Esteem issues play a major part of daily life.• Autonomy and attachment very important. Parents beginning to lose some control.• Depression and suicide, eating disorders, interrelationship difficulties.
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin to hypothesises make plans, form an objective point of view, see things from another's point of view. Can see the validity of others' point of view.• Reflective thinking should be encouraged. Metacognition (thinking about thinking) begins.• Pressure of exams, which college to go to will I get the points etc can be significant. Beginning senior cycle in school, taking responsibility for own learning.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have the ability to contribute and work within teams.• Other clubs age groups become more important. Friends becoming more important than family.
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a concept of their own uniqueness. Uncertainty regarding their own identity.

Post Adolescence Age 17-20 Main Theme: Maturity & Departure

Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instances of interpersonal complexity and their ability to deal with them has increased.
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical Growth Completed. Sexual intimacy playing a huge part in their lives.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationships founded on intimacy and complementarity
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abstract thinking maturing. Ability to make plans etc maturing. Ability to make mature and independent judgements and decisions.• Transition into college or working environment etc.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognition of enrichment due to accepting individual differences.• Problem of social and professional integration.
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building a respect for the concept of spirituality.

4.2 United Kingdom

4.2.1 Scouting for All

The United Kingdom Scouts proposed the following in their 2014-2018 “Scouting for All” Strategic Plan:

- We will develop a strategy to improve retention between, and within, sections.
- We believe a high quality programme is key to growth, so a revamped programme will be launched in 2015, and we’ll find new ways of measuring what a quality programme looks like.

Communication with the United Kingdom Scouts, and observation of the outcome of the proposed “revamped programme” will be beneficial to the Australian Scouts in considering their own program options with similar age ranges.

4.2.2 Losing Cubs

In June 2012 independent research organisation nfpSynergy conducted research into the Cub section to find out why young people stay in or leave Cubs. Specifically in relation to age range data, the UK Scouts were concerned by the following:

- Loss of older Cub Scouts, at around age 9
- Loss of young people who leave Cub Scouts at 10½ but do not start Scouts

The issues found in the research that may have led to these concerns are:

- Fewer children were born nine years ago than in previous years and therefore there are fewer potential and actual cubs.
- This age group is particularly vulnerable at this key developmental stage – despite how much more grown up than previous generations we may view them.
- There are some key factors that need to be in place for the experience at Cubs to be a positive one and hence stay on.

4.3 New Zealand

4.3.1 Experimenting with transition periods

Unlike most of the other international scouting bodies, New Zealand Scouts transition between sections inline with their school year (i.e. in Term 1) rather than on their birthday.

The Forward Planning Concepts Group (2006) conducted a report which included an age and transition review (see section 10.5.2). The approximate age ranges were taken from a standard school sample. The Forward Planning Concepts Group suggest that if transition points occurred at a time other than Term 1, age ranges would vary as seen in Table 7 below.

Table 7

New Zealand Scout section age ranges

			Current Model	Proposed Model
			Approximate Age Range	
SECTION	School Years	Form Reference	Transitions occur in Term 1	Transitions occur in Term 3
Keas	1, 2, 3	Prim 1 – Std 1	6–8	5.5 – 7.5
Cubs	4, 5, 6	Std 2 – 4	8 – 11	7.5 – 10.5
Scouts	7, 8, 9	1st – 3rd Form	11 – 14	10.5 – 13.5
Venturers	10, 11, 12, 13	4th – 7th Form	14 – 18	13.5 - 18

The report highlights that transfer points require further research. There are arguments against having it at the start of the year because this means they occur at the same time as a change of schools.

A summary of the remaining relevant points covered in this report are as follows:

- Moving large groups at the same time creates both challenges and opportunities (which can be developed under the National Programme system)
- Seamless Scouting concept remains – youth can change Sections at different times if necessary
- The start of the school year would be more identifiable for youth and their parents and improve planning cycles for Leaders, eg each year should finish with groups completing an award.
- It will change the ages for Scouts and Venturers. Venturers would leave Venturers at the end of Year 13 or their 18th birthday – whichever came last.

Following on from this suggestion to transition at a time different from Term 1, An Initial Training Woodbadge Workbook – Training Guide for Leaders (1.3 Section Organisation; revised July 2011) suggests Scouts New Zealand has a

preference for the transition to occur at the end of the third or beginning of the 4th school term so that the youth members are settled in the new section before breaking for Christmas.

Furthermore, there is safety in numbers and this is another reason why SCOUTS prefers to transition youth members together as a group. Experience shows the loss of members drops significantly when youth members move as a group. A clear demonstration of the suggested scout transition timing is seen in Table 8.

Table 8

Suggested New Zealand Scout Transition Timing

Section	School	Join Section	In Section	Transition Starts
Keas	Primary	YEAR 1	YEARS 2-3	TERM 4, YEAR 3
Cubs	Standard	YEAR 3	YEARS 4-6	TERM 4, YEAR 6
Scouts	Intermediate	YEAR 6	YEARS 7 – 10	TERM 4, YEAR 10
Venturers	Secondary	YEAR 10	YEARS 11 – 13	TERM 4, YEAR 13
Rovers	Tertiary	YEAR 13	YEARS 13+	AGED 26

4.4 Other General Considerations

4.4.1 Retention at transition points

The “Survey on retention of young people in Scouting” report was designed and executed by the Growth through Quality Working Group members, European Region – WOSM. Two findings that are relevant to the present paper are:

- There was a vast consensus among participants that transition processes from one group to the following, are very important concerning the retention of young people.
- When asked who should be taking care of the retention of young people, 63% of participants agreed that it should be the local unit, 20% of participants stated that this responsibility should be taken upon the district/county level and the remaining 17% reported that this should be the national level’s responsibility.

References

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